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any quarter of the land. One evening, in the Bay of Cadiz, returning from on board a foreign vessel, I was being rowed past the Spanish ironclad now "finishing," the "*Carlos Quinto*." The monster looked unsightly enough in her crude state, a blotchy, unpainted, rusty red from stem to stern, while the tinkle of a deliberately plied hammer on some loose plate gave an idea of unsecureness to the whole fabric. I asked my boatman how long she had been laid down. "Two years," he replied, and with a wry face, and a gesture expressive of drawing money from his pocket, he named the conservative and liberal leaders of his government in the same breath. "Curse them," he added, in a tone so horribly deliberate and sincere, it sounded almost as a reversed Angelus, floating over the still water to the ministerial condemnation. There was no marvel in his vehemence. In the *astilleros* of Ferrol the "*Cardinal Cisneros*" has been already five and a half years building, and when she will be fit to work, or steam, or fight—who knows? Not I, neither the Spanish Minister of Marine.

"*Fiate de la Virgen y no corras*," runs the national proverb—"trust in the Virgin, and don't run"—and with this policy pursued to the letter, in Cuba, and the schoolrooms, and the shipyards, the ministers count the notes wrung from a suffering people, and smilingly protest they will be soon a first-rate naval power, and that there is no country in the world so patriotic and so generous as Spain.

L. WILLIAMS.

NOTE.—As I have mentioned schools several times in the course of this essay, I give two instances of the present state of education. In the province of Guadalajara there are something over two hundred and fifty schoolmasters whose individual salaries do not reach five hundred pesetas per annum. The school of Cañamares receives an *annual* grant of forty-six pesetas (eight dollars, roughly). In spite of this scale of payment, the Department of Education owes the schools and teachers of this single province *one hundred and ninety-three thousand pesetas*. And the schoolmasters of Vélez-Málaga, literally at the point of starvation, have addressed a piteous circular, imploring aid, to the sovereigns and heads of other states, including the President of the French Republic.

Y esto se llama la hidalguia Española!

A DEFENCE OF OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

A DISTINGUISHED contributor to the last number of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* points out a serious defect in our Presidential electoral system; he shows that from the election of State electors on a common State ticket there results a great inequality in the value of individual votes in different States; that a voter in a smaller State, compared with a voter in a larger State, is at a grave disadvantage. The remedy proposed is to choose electors by districts instead of by States (except as to the two electors at large, who, as now, would be voted for on a State ticket).

As, by the Constitution, each State may direct the manner in which its electors shall be appointed, this remedy means an amendment requiring all States to appoint their electors by district electors. A constitutional amendment being an affair of great moment, the proposal invites public concern; and the following review of the arguments set forth is contributed to the general discussion of the matter.

It is asked whether it is a larger privilege to vote for twenty or thirty

electors than it is to vote for three or five. It is indeed a larger privilege; that is, if there is no detracting circumstances; we must remember that the question has further reference to the number of other voters with whom the privilege is shared. The prerogative of suffrage is as to its value one of mutual restriction.

"Does one vote cast for each of thirty electors have a greater power than does one vote cast for three electors?" Yes; *if* the first voting population is less than ten times the second voting population, but not otherwise. The power of a vote depends on two factors: first, the number of State electors; and second, the fraction that the voter is of the voting population of the State.

The argument reviewed overlooks the second factor. May this be done? Suppose that in Montana a voter has, owing to immigration, twelve times as many fellow-voters as formerly (the electoral vote remaining the same). Does his vote have the same force as before? Or suppose that his fellow voters are only one-twelfth as numerous. Does not his vote increase in force? If this is denied, let us suppose that it does not and after reducing the number of voters lower and lower till only our one voter remains, we shall find him absolutely controlling the State electoral vote. Yet by the supposition his vote has not gained in force, which shows the supposition inadmissible. The following, though not a parallel, is an illustration. Which is preferable, a chance of gaining thirty dollars or a chance of gaining three? Does it not depend somewhat on the relative probability of the two chances?

A voter's influence is the quotient of the number of State electors divided by the number of the voting population, and since these numbers are directly proportional (a proper assumption since the argument does not concern Senatorial electors) the quotient is constant. In other words the discovered inequality is imaginary. A man once invented an ingenious machine; it had one defect, however, which was that it would not work. In this case the remedy for the inequality does not work, as there is no work for it.

It is argued: "In the State of New York the voter casts a ballot for each of thirty-six electors. His vote is counted for each, and each elector chosen by that ballot votes for President; so that the vote of one man bears directly on thirty-six votes in the Electoral College. In one respect a man has but one voice, but that one voice is potential in filling many seats in the body which decides the election. . . . In another State of less population a voter has a voice in the election of three electors. . . . In this condition of things it is pretty evident that the voter in New York has twelve times the power in the choice of President that he possesses who must exercise the right of suffrage in the smaller State." This argument assumes that a voter's power is unaffected by the number of those who are admitted with him to the polls. A child estimates five pennies as more valuable than four dimes: five is greater than four; but even a young child is quick to understand that the more who are admitted with him to divide a cake, the smaller his piece will be.

In the last quotation, the New York voter is spoken of as choosing his State's electors; but each voter only *helps* in the choosing; and it will be noticed that while the New York voter helps to choose *more* electors he helps *less* to choose them. So also when we are told that his vote "bears directly on thirty-six votes in the Electoral College" and that his voice is

"potential in filling many seats," may we not ask *how strongly* it bears, and *to what degree* it is potential? This consideration is ignored.

"Is not the vote multiplied or its power increased in proportion to the number of electors it helps to elect?" Not altogether; in proportion to the number of electors it helps to elect *and* to the share it has in their election. Increasing the number of electors increases a voter's power, but a corresponding change in the voting population decreases it back in the same proportion inversely.

Suppose New York and Montana each carried by 1,100 votes. Now have the 1,100 voters in New York twelve times the power of those in Montana? What 1,100 voters in New York? Why, those that compose the majority. But who are they? Is there any rule by which they can be pointed out? We may pick out in Erie County 1,100 men who voted the winning ticket, and say that if they had voted on the other side it would have changed the result, but can we credit them with the election? Not unless we also credit the election in turn to each such group of 1,100 in the whole State who voted the winning ticket.

It comes to this that no 1,100 men but the half million and odd victors have carried the State. The 1,100 majority cannot be given local habitations and names. The half million and odd majority is composed of real men, but the 1,100 majority is a category; and to imagine it real beings is a mistake as great, though of an opposite kind, as that of the man who picked up a chair and said "I hold in my hands a noun."

It would be wrong to argue that if the State has been carried by 1,100 votes, 1,100 votes have carried the State. "*By*" does not here denote the agent but the measure of excess. We could not deny that the farmer sold the wheat, because the wheat was sold *by the bushel*. Usage permits many ambiguous expressions, but we must not be misled by them in reasoning. Nor could it be argued, under our system a majority wins (suppose two parties only); but the majority was 1,100 votes; then 1,100 votes won. The middle term is double; "majority" means first the larger of the two divisions into which the people divide themselves, and second the excess of the larger division over the smaller. Again in the expression "carried by a majority of 1,100," "of" denotes a property of the majority, not its composition. Here are three instances of words that may lead to sophistry.

Suppose New York and Montana each carried by 1,100 votes; a change of 600 votes in each State would mean a change of thirty-six and three electoral votes respectively. A change of 600 in New York would indeed have twelve times the effect of such a change in Montana, *if* no other votes changed in the opposite direction. The reversing of the total electoral vote of the State really depends not only on the change of 600 votes, but also and much more largely on the *permanence* of the votes which the 600 went to increase. Who will say that keeping the old ranks steady is not as important as enlisting recruits, however less spectacular? Of what good would be recruits from the enemy if offset by deserters to the enemy? A man standing on another man's shoulders and waving a flag should not attribute the elevation of the flag entirely to his own stature. He would see his mistake if the man below were to withdraw his support.

"Nor is it possible that twelve votes cast in Montana can equal one vote cast in New York, for the one vote touches the election of thirty-six electors in New York, while the twelve votes in Montana can only affect three electors." This leads to a startling conclusion; if true for Montana it is true

for another State (they are all smaller than New York), and if true for twelve votes it is true for a larger number. It follows, for instance, that it is not possible that 90,000 votes in Pennsylvania can equal one vote cast in New York, for the one vote touches the election of thirty-six electors in New York while the 90,000 votes in Pennsylvania can only affect thirty-two electors. Can we believe anything like this? The gist of the matter is that one vote in Montana, while it "touches" only three electors, touches them *twelve times as hard* as a New York vote touches its thirty-six.

"If the ballot for each elector were cast separately he of Montana would vote three times and he of New York thirty-six times. Say not then that the ways of the system are equal." Yes, the New York man would vote oftener. It is as though he would travel around the State and vote in each district; but then he would have everybody in the State travelling around and voting with him and so lessening the worth of each of his votes.

It is all a matter of quantity and quality, or, as the poet says, of "fineness compensating size." The New York man's vote is more bulky, but it has a lower specific gravity; it is more extended, but it is not so intense; it denotes more, but it connotes less; all in inverse variation.

The New York Electoral College is like a machine of which the voters are the power and thirty-six electoral votes sent to Washington the work. The voters of Montana are the power of another like machine and three votes sent to Washington are their work. Now, the argument concerning district electors only, we may assume that the voters in the two States are, as regards numbers, as thirty-six to three, and since their work is as thirty-six to three, they must individually be of equal power. Taking the true ratio of population, about thirty-four to one, we can argue that for a stronger reason an individual voter in New York has not more influence than one in Montana. If of round lead bullets a given number of one lot weighs so much and twelve times that number of another lot weighs twelve times as much, we know that the two lots of bullets are of the same calibre.

As to electors at large we read: "The thing sought [being equality in the power of the individual voter in all the States, the principle contended for is not violated by the electors of senatorial electors on a common ticket for the State." Let us see. A Montana and a New York voter each vote for two senatorial electors, but the first voter has more influence in the selection of his two for the reason that there are fewer other persons who have any voice in the matter; he is a member of a *closer corporation*. To fit the system proposed, senatorial electors should be abolished.

For the proposed method there is one good argument, proportional minority representation. This argument is advanced but strangely confused; the *majority* is spoken of as being overborne, as though it were not the fundamental principle of democracy that the people are free to marshal themselves as they like and that the division which is out-numbered can never assume to be the majority whatever its other pretensions.

These conclusions seem to follow: First, that as to district electors, a voter in a smaller State is not at a grievous disadvantage compared with one in a larger State, but is equal to him; second, that as to senatorial electors the second voter is not equal to the first, but at a disadvantage; third, that the proposed system of electing district electors by districts would, as between voters in smaller and larger States, leave the matter unchanged, and that the argument of inequality has no weight.

NEAL EWING.